**Housing and poverty alleviation**

1910. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether with the increase of population in every city, housing and poverty alleviation is becoming a major problem;

(b) whether there is any alternative strategy to make life in the villages better so that people are not forced to leave their homes; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In the rural areas, Government has launched the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in February, 2006. A large number of Districts have been covered under the Scheme. The objective of the Scheme is to enhance the livelihood security of the people in rural areas by generating wage employment through works that develop the infrastructure base of the area.

**Indian work force in Middle East**

1911. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have signed an Agreement with the Middle-East countries to protect the interest of our work force there;

(b) if so, the countries with which such agreements have been entered into;

(c) whether the terms of agreement are implemented in letter and spirit; and

(d) the reason for this kind of agreement not being resorted to in Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka where there are huge number of workers of Indian origin?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, the Government has signed MoU with United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. The Ministry has finalized an Additional Protocol with Qatar to update the 1985 Agreement.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) MoU with Malaysia has been finalized. MoUs are also being pursued with countries which have large population of Indian emigrant workers. There is no proposal to sign MoU with Singapore and Sri Lanka due to small size of emigrant flows to these countries.

**Cases under Emigration ACT/IPC**

1912. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the cases registered under the Emigration Act/IPC for illegal trafficking during the last five years and their disposal;